

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13. (canceled).

Claim 14. (original) A sintered body comprising a niobium granule which comprises niobium and tantalum, wherein the tantalum is present in an amount of at most about 700 ppm by mass.

Claim 15. (original) The sintered body as claimed in claim 14, wherein the niobium granule is partially nitrided.

Claim 16. (original) The sintered body as claimed in claim 15, wherein an amount of the niobium granule nitrided is from about 10 to about 100,000 of ppm by mass.

Claim 17. (original) A method for producing a niobium sintered body, comprising sintering a niobium granule compact at a high temperature, wherein the niobium granule comprises niobium and tantalum, wherein the tantalum is present in an amount of at most about 700 ppm by mass, and heating said niobium granule under reduced pressure at about 500 to about 2,000 °C for about 1 minute to about 10 hours.

Claim 18. (original) The method for producing a niobium sintered body as claimed in claim 17, wherein the niobium granule is partially nitrided.

Claim 19. (original) The method for producing a niobium sintered body as claimed in claim 18, wherein an amount of the niobium granule is from about 10 to about 100,000 of ppm by mass.

Claim 20. (original) The method for producing a niobium sintered body as claimed in claim 17, wherein the niobium powder is obtained by granulating a niobium powder having an average primary particle size of about 1 μm or less.

Claim 21. (original) The method for producing a niobium sintered body as claimed in claim 18, wherein the niobium powder is obtained by granulating a niobium powder having an average primary particle size of about 1 μm or less.

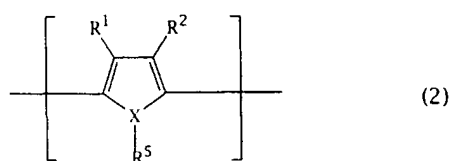
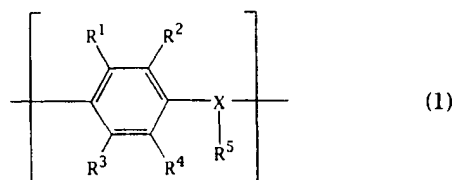
Claim 22. (original) The method for producing a niobium sintered body as claimed in claim 19, wherein the niobium powder is obtained by granulating a niobium powder having an average primary particle size of about 1 μm or less.

Claim 23. (original) A capacitor comprising a pair of electrodes having interposed therebetween a dielectric material, with one of the electrodes being a niobium sintered body comprising niobium and tantalum, wherein the tantalum is present in an amount of at most about 700 ppm by mass.

Claim 24. (original) The capacitor as claimed in claim 23, wherein the dielectric material comprises niobium oxide formed by electrolytic oxidation.

Claim 25. (original) The capacitor as claimed in claim 23, wherein the other electrode is at least one material selected from the group consisting of an electrolytic solution, an organic semiconductor and an inorganic semiconductor.

Claim 26. (original) The capacitor as claimed in claim 23, wherein the other electrode is formed of at least one organic semiconductor selected from the group consisting of an organic semiconductor comprising benzopyrroline tetramer and chloranile, an organic semiconductor mainly comprising tetrathiotetracene, an organic semiconductor mainly comprising tetracyanoquinodimethane, and an organic semiconductor mainly comprising an electrically conducting polymer obtained by doping a dopant into a polymer containing two or more repeating units represented by formula (1) or (2):



wherein R^1 to R^4 , which may be the same or different, each represents hydrogen, an alkyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms or an alkoxy group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, X represents an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom or a nitrogen atom, R^5 is present only when X is a nitrogen atom and represents hydrogen or an alkyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and R^1 and R^2 , or R^3 and R^4 may be combined with each other to form a ring.

Claim 27. (original) The capacitor according to claim 23, wherein the other electrode comprises an organic semiconductor selected from the group consisting of polypyrrole, polythiophene and substitution derivatives thereof.

Claim 28. (original) An electronic circuit including the capacitor as claimed in claim 23.

Claim 29. (original) Electronic equipment including the capacitor as claimed in claim 23.

Claim 30. (original) The sintered body as claimed in claim 14, wherein the niobium granule is obtained by standing niobium powder at a high temperature to obtain a coagulation-solidified powder and then cracking the coagulation-solidified powder.

Claim 31. (original) The method for producing a niobium sintered body as claimed in claim 17, wherein the niobium granule is obtained by standing niobium powder at a high temperature to obtain a coagulation-solidified powder and then cracking the coagulation-solidified powder.

Claim 32. (original) The capacitor as claimed in claim 23, wherein the niobium granule is obtained by standing niobium powder at a high temperature to obtain a coagulation-solidified powder and then cracking the coagulation-solidified powder.